

a mobile unit which receives the signals from the base station, the mobile unit containing a first speech coder and a second speech coder, wherein the first speech encoder is bit-exact and the second speech encoder is not bit-exact, the mobile unit encoding voice data in a signal to transmit using either the first speech coder or the second speech coder;

a signal strength detector in the mobile unit which determines the quality of the signals received by the mobile unit; and

a coder selector in the mobile unit which directs the mobile unit to switch from the first speech coder to the second speech coder when the quality of the signals exceeds predetermined levels, wherein the second speech encoder reduces power consumption in the mobile unit.

5. (Amended) The wireless communication system of Claim 1, wherein the first speech coder and the second speech coder are compatible.

8. (Twice amended) A method of conserving power in a wireless communication system comprising the acts of:

determining the quality of at least one signal received from a base station; and

selecting in a mobile unit a secondary speech coder when the signal quality exceeds a predetermined value, wherein the secondary speech coder is less accurate than a primary speech coder.

18. (Twice amended) A wireless communication system comprising; a processor usage indicator which determines the loading on a processor in a mobile unit; and

a speech coder selector in a mobile unit which causes the mobile unit to use a secondary speech coder when the loading on the processor exceeds a set value, wherein the secondary speech coder is less accurate than a primary speech coder.

22. (Amended) The wireless communication system of Claim 18, wherein the speech coder selector causes the mobile unit to use the primary speech coder when the loading on the processor is less than a set value.

27. (Twice amended) A wireless communication system comprising;